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ABSTRACT

Noting that social interaction theory has long been characterized by a plethora of divergent research studies in search of an organizing paradigm, and that a common failing of most social interaction research has been its focus on process or change in relationships, the first part of this paper specifies the major limiting, or boundary, conditions of social interaction. The second part of the paper discusses the six elements said to constitute the domain of social interaction: content, interpretation, emotions, transference, selection, and relationships. The third part of the paper explicates the major interrelationships among the elements within the domain of social interaction. This perspective is used in the last part of the paper to examine three middle range approaches to social interaction: relational communication, rules, and sequences. The paper concludes by suggesting that without an organizing paradigm, social interaction research will continue to be a field characterized by much activity, but also by a very halting and erratic development of conceptual understandings of the phenomenon which should be its focus of inquiry. (HOD)

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CONCEPTUAL APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF SMALL GROUP INTERACTION

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CONCEPTUAL APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF SMALL GROUP INTERACTION

Social interaction theory has long been characterized by a plethora of divergent research studies in search of an organizing paradigm. If anything this body of research has studiously avoided conceptualizing its most fundamental properties. This is seen in three trends common to most research in this area. One, social interaction has often been treated as a 'black box' that is seen as a determinant cause of such effects as attitude change or task performance, although the dynamics involved are assumed rather than specified. Two, social interaction is often examined through a focus on its particular boundary or limiting conditions particularly related to such contextual factors as group decision making or group problem solving. Three, more recently, social interaction research has been characterized by middle range approaches which focus on a subset of its elements (relational communication) or on its more mechanistic expressions (e.g. rules and sequences). If a perspective implies a systematic description of the elements of a phenomenon and a specification of their interrelationships, then no coherent widely recognized perspective of the phenomenon of social interaction has been developed.

Another common failing of most social interaction research is its focus on process or change in relationships. Most social interaction research has been conducted on temporary ad hoc groups brought together for experimental purposes or for the explicit purpose of change, such as in therapeutic contexts. The almost exclusive examination of these interactions has left the impression

that social interaction is a very dynamic and unstable process. As Crockett and Friedman have noted, little theoretic attention has been given to relationships that stabilize, especially at less than intimate levels.[1] It has been noted that once a relationship reaches an equilibrium, it can be modeled by linear relationships, characterized by some elements which take theoretical precedence over others.[2] That is once a relationship passes the initial encounter, it develops more slowly over time[3] such that any one interaction episode is unlikely to change it, rather change comes about as a result of repeated episodes or of contextual factors. Since the raison de etre of most communication encounters is the development of stable relationships[4] and most of our interactions are with acquaintances of long standing rather than with strangers, the stable state of social interaction needs to be specified. As a result the focus here is on the structure of continuous ongoing relationships, the enduring encounters that form the bulk of our interactions.

This essay seeks to explicate a transituational perspective, one divorced from particular contexts, of ongoing, social interactions by exhaustively specifying its domain and the interrelationships between elements within that domain. Part I will specify the major limiting, or boundary conditions, of social interaction. Since these conditions often determine particular manifest behaviors of social interaction, the perspective developed here will be presented at a relatively high level of abstraction, since it seeks to explicate those elements of social interaction operative across a wide range of situations. Part II discusses the six elements said to constitute the domain of social interaction: content, interpretation, emotions, transference, selection and relationships. Part III will explicate the major interrelationships among elements within the domain of social interaction. In Part IV this perspective

will be used to examine three middle range approaches to social interaction: relational communication, rules, and sequences.

I. BOUNDARY CONDITIONS

Traditionally studies of social interaction have followed a classic independent/dependent variable paradigm where 'inputs' or limiting conditions of social interaction, (e.g. setting, context), are examined for their effects on "outputs," or the effects of social interaction, such as changes in self-concept, attitude change or information gain.[5] This lack of a focus on the phenomenon itself is in part attributable to a failure to specify those boundary conditions operative across a wide variety of situations. Identification of these conditions is the first step in conceptualizing any phenomenon, since boundaries must be determined before a domain can be specified.[6] Part of the problem here is the very permeability of the boundary.[7] The three boundary conditions identified here are all intimately related to social interaction, since they serve to establish the parameters that determine the manner in which elements will be manifested in any one situation. However, these three conditions, and other more idiosyncratic conditions related to specific situations, are not part of the domain of social interaction but rather act as its limiting conditions.

The first boundary condition is culturally and/or biologically determined rules.[8] "Once a social situation has been identified, persons automatically apply rules of behavior they feel to be pertinent."[9] These rules must be differentiated from consensually generated rules determined by interactants. In fact their key property is that interactants have little discretion concerning the general form of these rules.

Second, the setting, or environment within which the interaction occurs is naturally going to impact any particular social interaction;[10] since it can determine the quality or substance of the interaction, the possibilities for interaction, or the degree of attention given to other interactants.

Third, the context of an interaction, including its historical antecedents, the type or function of the interaction, and the tasks performed, plays a crucial role in determining the form of social interaction episodes.[11]

Context is perhaps the prime source of conceptual confusion concerning the true nature of social interaction. For example, studies on the effects of communication networks on task performance are fairly typical of research related to social interaction. In a broad sense these studies are examining task performance in groups, in the narrow sense the domain of social interaction is distorted, since in these studies only two of its elements, communication rates and selection, are incorporated. This leads to two problems: one, the particular context examined limits the generalizability of findings, and two, focusing on this context distorts the nature of social interaction since in any one context certain interrelationships and elements are more salient than others, masking social interactions universal domains and underlying interrelationships.[12]

The thrust of this paper is to develop a perspective of social interaction that is not limited to any one particular context, but rather to specify the elemental structure of social interaction that is evident in all situations. In contrast to other more descriptive approaches to social interaction, which seek to uniquely characterize it in one setting, this essay seeks to develop a transituational approach, one that isolates those fundamental elements that are unique to social interaction as a construct, across a wide array of situations.[13]

II: THE DOMAIN

From the 1940's until recently most research related to social interaction has either been intertwined with the preceding limiting conditions or has been descriptive. Descriptive research has focused on the isolation of important categories of acts, or various indicants within the domain of social interaction. These descriptions of the elements of social interaction have been cast at a relatively low level of abstraction, since they are heavily dependent on particular contexts. As a result the level of conceptualization of most of this research is rather primitive, since it either lists variables without explicating them or defines them by means of their operationalizations.[14] However, a review of this research can provide an overview of the major elements of social interaction for as Simmel has noted: "...we shall discover laws of social forms only by collecting such societary phenomenon of the most diverse contents, and by ascertaining what is common in them in spite of their diversity."[15]

The domain of social interaction, very simply stated, consists of six major elements: content, interpretation, emotion, transference, selection, and relationships. Appendix A contains a review of thirty descriptions of social interaction. This review demonstrates that all of these elements have previously been identified by social interaction researchers. In the next section arguments will be made concerning how these elements exhaustively describe the domain of social interaction, in this section the focus will be on defining these elements and placing them in the context of the literature. While it is beyond the scope of this essay to examine every description of social interaction reported over the last forty years, these studies constitute a representative sampling containing dyadic and group interaction situations in a wide range of contexts.

The focus for some of these researchers was on a more limited range of the elements of the domain of social interaction, but they still provide useful insight into the scope of the phenomenon. Collectively this broad, representative sampling provides a more exhaustive picture of the entirety of the domain of social interaction.[16]

Content

Content is the denotative meaning of symbols expressed during an interaction. This is the literal meaning of what is said; the meaning of the interaction to a third party who is unaware of the background of the actors and other factors that may influence the true meaning of symbols for interactants.

The six researchers who cited content were interested in designing category schemes for fairly abstract and widely generalizable purposes, such as Hare's attempt to establish a paradigm for the analysis of interaction, as a result content was typically neither defined or elaborated upon, but rather listed with other elements.[17]

Interpretation

Interpretation represents the connotative meaning associated with expressed symbols. Interactants develop idiosyncratic meanings for symbols as a result of their unique histories,[18] these meanings serve to fill in the gaps of the abbreviated shorthand of manifest content.[19] Thus content is given texture and significance from a holistic interpretation of the contextual factors of any particular interaction. As a result descriptions of social interaction that incorporate interpretations are often designed to describe specific contexts,[20] which limits their generalizability. Only Borgatta, Longabaugh, Hare, Stenzor, and Bales of the 17 researchers who include interpretations apparently intended that their descriptions be generalizable across a wide range of situations.[21]

In general, schemes that incorporated interpretation, also focused on a narrow range of the elements of social interaction.

Emotions

Emotions reflect the affective states that exist between interactants. Of primary importance here are those emotions that bond individuals together, such as the need for affiliation, and those emotions that are related to other interactants, such as love and friendship, rather than those that are exclusively related to the individual, such as depression. The role of emotions has long been recognized in social interaction research. In the 1950's the field explicitly recognized the existence of the socioemotional dimension of groups, giving it equal importance with the task dimension.[22] However, in recent years the role of emotions has been neglected in favor of more formal and mechanistic treatments of social interactions.[23]

Fourteen of the descriptions reviewed here include this element with only Taylor, who was attempting to identify the emotional dimensionality of groups, not specifying another element in the domain of social interaction.[24]

Transference

Transference is used here to refer to overt acts of symbol exchange. Thus transference is the means (e.g., the physical method/channel or act) by which symbols are transmitted between parties in an interaction. Of the fifteen descriptions that contain an element related to transference only two, Jaffe and Feldstein's and McGinnies and Altman's, fail to contain other elements within the domain. These descriptions are either relatively specific in identifying subcategories of transference, e.g. Bostrom's, or are very general, for example Watson's conversational style. The descriptions containing transference are equally split between those designed for specific or relatively general contexts.[25]

Selection

Selection is a two fold concept. First interactants choose to attend to someone. While this is a given in dyadic interactions, this determines the structure of group interactions. Once someone is selected, then the level of attention that is paid to the chosen interactant will vary depending on boundary conditions and the other elements of social interaction.

Only a limited number of the descriptions reviewed here explicitly identify selection. Argyle included in his scheme a category for non-verbal responsiveness, which reflect signals of attentiveness from one interactant to another.[26] Bostrom called his category selectivity and described it in terms of relative concentration.[27] Lewis et al. included listening in their category scheme.[28] Goffman termed external preoccupation, self-consciousness, interaction consciousness, and other consciousness as forms of alientation from interaction, or in other words, forms of selection.[29] All four used their concepts to indicate the interactant's level of attention.

Relationships

Relationships reflect the nature of the bonding between interactants. Parties to an interaction typically manifest a stable pattern of response to one another which reflects their normative pattern of relating. There are two primary types of relationships. Contextually determined relationships are associated with situationally or culturally determined roles (e.g. supervisor-subordinate interactions). Actor determined relationships reflect the unique clusters of bondings which characterize any particular interaction (e.g. responsiveness, dominance).

Eight of the descriptions of social interaction reviewed here contain relationship elements. These researchers generally intended their schemes to be applicable across a wide range of situations and conceived them at relatively abstract levels. As a result they all contain other elements within the domain. Some of the descriptions just use the term relationship to describe this element, while others specify subcategories of relationships. However, none of the schemes that cite subcategories exhaustively describe the major sub-types of relationships possible in social interaction.[30]

Concluding Remarks on Domain

In summary, Appendix A demonstrates that there has been a problem of generality in previous descriptions of social interaction.[31] Only two of the thirty descriptions of social interaction include even five of the six elements of the domain, even though all of them have been identified by a substantial number of researchers. Of all of the elements of social interaction interpretation is the most frequently represented (17), followed by emotion (14), transference (13), relationships (8), content (6), and selection (4).

Thus this systematic review suggests that all of these elements are important components of social interaction. Their incorporation in the domain establishes a perspective of social interaction of broader scope, since "the generality of a scientific model depends solely upon the size of the domain it represents. This, therefore, suggests that the fundamental process of coming to general models in any science is the process of involving the expansions of models with narrow ranges."[32]

Not only must the coverage of the elements of the domain be inclusive, it also must be arguable that the elements are pervasive, that is, they will be present in any one interaction. Conventionally social interaction has been

conceived as series of mutually exclusive discrete acts, with only one act being present at any point in the interaction. But, as Hewes has noted, at the conceptual level there are sound reasons for abandoning the notion of mutual exclusivity.[33] While individual elements can be conceived as series of discrete acts, the entire domain of social interaction is characterized by the dynamic interplay of simultaneously present levels of each of the elements within the domain.[34] It is to these interrelationships between continuously present elements that we now turn, since they vastly increase the richness and breadth of our understanding of social interaction.[35]

III: INTERRELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN ELEMENTS

For a complete perspective of social interaction not only must limiting conditions be identified and the domain be specified, but the unique role of the elements and their interrelationships must be explicated. In this section the elements of social interaction will be uniquely classified by their meta-function and by their phenomenal level. These classifications specify unique portions of the range of the domain for each of the six elements (see Figure 1). They also entail natural logical and temporal relationships between elements that necessitate certain interrelationships.

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Figure 1 About Here

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Meta-functional Dimensions

One of the oldest distinctions made in the study of social interaction is that between substance and form.[36] Hare's exhaustive description of the elements of group interaction explicitly makes this distinction in identifying two primary dimensions of social interaction: form (e.g. communication network

and interaction rate) and content (e.g., socioemotional and task).[37] In any relationship there are two implicit meta-functional dimensions: one is the substance and the other is the means or method by which this substance takes form. Three of the six elements can be clearly identified as substances: content, interpretation and emotions. The other elements-transference, selection, and relationships-represent the form or manner in which these substance are expressed. Increasingly in recent years this distinction is made implicitly or explicitly between subsets of the elements of social interaction within the field of communication.[38] However, to uniquely classify the elements of social interaction another distinction needs to be established since each of the elements also have a unique phenomenal role in interaction.

Overview of Phenomenal Levels

Social interaction is characterized not only by the manifest acts typically observed during the course of an interaction, but also by the elements that underlie and determine these acts. Three phenomenal levels can be distinguished in social interaction since each of the elements can naturally be placed exclusively at one of these three levels. The three phenomenal levels are the manifest, the mediating, and the underlying. Two factors will be used to place each of the elements within the domain of social interaction at one of these levels. The first is the temporal nature of the element: is it relatively fleeting, and thus one of the manifest elements, or is it relatively enduring, and one of the underlying elements.

The seconc distinction is the element's level of abstraction. Here the concern is the extent to which another element is subsumed by[39] or is determined by the other elements.[40] Pearce and Conklin[41] recognize the importance of this distinction by asserting a natural prepotence of elements at deeper

phenomenal levels similar to the ones described here, albeit in a slightly different context.

An integral part of an element's level of abstraction is the nature of the element. The underlying elements describe the basic drives of the interactants to interact in the first instance which reflect their need to associate with others to accomplish or fulfill needs, goals, or instincts that can't be done individually. The mediating elements represent cognitive factors that determine the means by which these underlying elements, or deep structures, will be manifested. The manifest level constitutes observable acts in an interaction; these acts are reflections of the deeper processes and, as such, they reveal them, but they are imperfect reflections, since at each level there are limits to which succeeding levels can be fully realized.

Underlying

Relationships and emotions are the two underlying elements in this perspective. Relationship is an underlying element because "interaction grows out of the roles we play, the defined relationships we have in various groups."[42] Relationships so govern our day to day interactions that our behavior has been seen by many to be rule governed; that is, the nature of our relationships determines the shape of our interactions.[43]

Curiously, emotions have been infrequently examined in most recent studies of communication, even though they have been found to have a direct impact on transference[44] and have been cited as a crucial element of the conceptual domain of interpersonal communication. The failure to explicitly recognize this element grows out of the misunderstanding of the expression of this element in relationships and its role as a substance.[45]

Both relationships and emotions constitute the fundamental properties of

social interaction; the structure that underlies all that is eventually manifested in particular acts. They are the primary reasons for interaction in the first instance. It is surely not meaning, content or talk-silence patterns that bring us together, but rather more compelling forces, that can only be understood by exploration of these fundamental elements. Thus these elements operate at a higher level of abstraction than the other elements since they subsume them.

These elements also have a unique temporal character; relationships and emotions are not fleeting phenomena, but glacial ones. Any one interaction episode is unlikely to result in changes in these elements: they, in effect are at most weakly affected by the other elements. The different temporal perspectives implied by this phenomenal level suggest inherent differences in the causal flows in any single interaction episode. For most enduring interactions a certain inertia has developed, a well established and recurring pattern of behavior that will only change gradually. So, while it may be true that during the entire course of a relationship, content may effect deeper phenomenal levels, this only happens gradually from a cumulative weight of similar individual episodes.

Mediating

Elements of social interaction at the mediating level, interpretation and selection, transform the underlying elements into manifest acts. Norton and Pettigrew implicitly recognize this level when they suggest that manifest acts must be translated through the cognitive processes operative at the mediating level.[46] The time frame for acts at this level is more rapid than for the underlying elements, although it is more inclusive than that for the

manifest level. For example, any one affiliative, affective state in the interaction such as friendship, requires a multiplicity of interpretations on the part of interactions to be given psychological substance.

Perhaps the most frequently made distinction between elements is that between interpretation and content. Bales has always maintained that his preeminent approach to categorizing group interaction was designed to tap the underlying meaning of manifest content in fact, he terms his approach process analysis to distinguish it from content analysis.[47] In fact to Hare manifest content is representative of the deeper underlying problems or functions of the group.[48] In addition to being distinct concepts, these elements have differing logical levels. "Since relational aspects of messages serve to guide the interpretation and meaning of content aspects, they function at a higher logical level than content aspects."[49]

Manifest

At the manifest level of social interaction are the content and transference elements. These are the acts between interactants that, in essence, constitute the "stream of behavior."[50] These acts are the final result of the forces that operate at the underlying level, which are in turn shaped by the cognitive processes at the mediating level. These acts give social interaction the appearance of fluidity and constant change, since they are relatively fleeting phenomena, but they often represent the remarkably stable forces operative at the underlying levels. Indeed it may take many particular topics of conversations and related communicative acts to express a single interpretation or meaning.[51] More importantly, it may take an entire interaction episode or set of episodes to express to another interactant one feeling.

Interrelationships Between Elements of the Domain

In this section the six elements that constitute the domain of social

interaction have been classified according to two distinctions: whether they constitute the substance of the interaction or its form of expression and by their phenomenal level. Each element can be assigned to mutually exclusive roles in interactions based on these classifications and, since each area of the domain is encompassed by one of the elements, these distinctions are exhaustive.

In addition to accounting for the domain of social interaction any true perspective must also specify interrelationships among its elements. At this stage necessity, or the factors that make any observed regularities expected and interpretable, becomes the focus of inquiry.[52] In discussing phenomenal levels two factors were explicated that entail necessity: level of abstraction and temporal characteristics. The overwhelming direction of causality in ongoing interactions is from the underlying to the surface elements since the underlying elements are temporally more stable and because they subsume the surface elements at higher logical levels. The underlying elements represent the overriding motives to interact in the first instance, the cognitive processes represented by the mediating elements translate the instinctual, determinative nature of the underlying elements, and the manifest elements represent the observable manifestation of these underlying forces. Thus differing kinds of necessity act to translate each succeeding level in the interaction.

A Model of Social Interaction

The previous discussion suggests a model of social interaction. This model is based on the classifications of elements within the domain of social interaction, and their associated logical and temporal characteristics. While

it is beyond the scope of this essay to provide great detail on the relationships between elements contained in the model (presented in Figure 2), its general form will be stated, since it will be useful in discussing current approaches to social interaction.[53]

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Figure 2 About Here

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In general the model posits that variables at deeper phenomenal levels cause those at more surface levels within the same metafunctional classification. In addition, between the underlying and mediating levels, emotions in part determine selection and relationships affect interpretations. The metafunctional substances of the interaction are posited to determine its form at the same phenomenal level.

Empirical tests of the model have been conducted in two separate studies: one involving a sample of adults from a large midwestern city and the other in an experimental setting with college students. These tests strongly support the assertion that elements at deeper phenomenal levels determine those at more surface levels in ongoing interactions. There was somewhat weaker, though still significant, support for the causal relationships between the substance and form elements at the same phenomenal level. In spite of the fact that the model does not contain the reciprocal paths implied by most current conceptions of social interaction and an explicit specification of limiting conditions, its overall goodness of fit to the data was supportive of this conceptual framework in both tests. Thus the perspective developed here has received empirical support in programmatic research conducted in different settings with differing methodologies.

IV. MIDDLE RANGE APPROACHES TO SOCIAL INTERACTION

In this section, three current perspectives related to social interaction, rules, relational, and sequences, will be discussed primarily in terms of the range of the domain they examine and their specification of interrelationships. The descriptive approaches to social interaction reviewed earlier examined only limited ranges of its domain and failed to specify interrelationships. Rules, relational and sequential approaches still cover only limited ranges of the domain, albeit at a more sophisticated level, at least in terms of experimental design, coding procedures, and statistical analyses. The crucial difference between these approaches and earlier ones is that they attempt to specify relationships between and within elements. However, since they examine only a subset of the domain and of interrelationships, these approaches still must be considered to be only middle range approaches.[54]

Relational Communication

Relational communication (or control) is perhaps the most suggestive of the conceptual approach to social interaction developed here since its intellectual precursors in the Palo Alto group "aimed to investigate the general nature of communication in terms of levels."[55] As defined by most researchers in the field of communication, "Relational control . . . refers to those aspects of the message exchange process through which interactants reciprocally define and redefine their relative positions vis-a-vis the other."[56]

The domain of relational communication would appear to be relationships and content, but there are instances when both the relational and content elements are defined as elements of interpretation. This results in a telescoping of elements

in some conceptualizations, since both these major elements of the domain are explicated in terms of the interpretations of messages dealing with relationships. This is most clearly seen in Parks's definition: "Messages which define, confirm or redefine human relationships have been referred to as relational communication."[57]

Another area of difficulty with this approach is the treatment of elements at the underlying level. Relationships, not just messages about them, are seemingly examined in some contexts. This is especially true in research where the message is used as a basis for determining the underlying nature of the relationship. Thus, studies dealing with complementarity, symmetry, domineeringness, and dominance use manifest elements of the interaction as indicants of relationship. However, it often appears in these studies implicitly or explicitly that the focus of relational communication is not communication or interaction, but the larger domain of social influence.[58]

Thus, relational communication would appear at various times to include content, interpretation and relationships; but by defining social influence as one of its key limiting conditions, it also limits its range even among these elements, excluding notions of affiliative bonding for example. It also explicitly or implicitly defines away other elements of the domain of group interaction. This is most astonishing in the case of emotions, since the settings in which relational communication research is typically conducted should be rich in emotional implications for interactants. Parks explicitly delimits the boundary of relational communication so that emotions are not included, even though in the same breath he recognizes them as one of the two major dimensions of social interaction.[59]

This may be partially attributable to the lack of recognition of the distinction between the substance and form of expression elements, which also leads to the exclusion of transference and selection. Perhaps because in most research contexts relationships are given and fairly intense selection is assumed, this element isn't explicitly included, but curiously, transference is only examined by implication. There must be some explicit acts of overt symbol transfer involved, at least in terms of sequences of acts, but their nature and the effects of other variables on this form of expression element are never explicated; rather, it becomes the unit of analysis of the research.

More troubling is the insistence of relational communication perspectives on reciprocal causality, which entails two elements--content and relationships--operating in the same temporal frame. This is partially attributable to the domain and contexts that are typically examined by relational communication researchers. Their focus is on change in relationships, one aspect of social interaction, thus relational communication has typically been examined in psychotherapeutic sessions or family therapy. But even in these contexts it is commonly recognized that a number of interaction episodes focused on the same content are needed before there can even be a cognitive recognition, at the mediating level, of the nature of the underlying relationships. Changes in the nature of the underlying elements themselves require a number of focused interpretations over repeated episodes. In most recent research, in part because of this difficulty, relational communication has focused on what the mediating and manifest levels reveal about the underlying relationships between interactants.[60]

Rules

Rules approaches to social interaction are primarily concerned with accounting for observed regularities in human interaction, such as those found

in family life, thus this approach can trace its origins partially from the Palo Alto Group.[61] It is often asserted that rules are based on consensual understandings between actors;[62] as such they must be differentiated from rules that are imposed on interactants by external forces.[63] Rules approaches appear to be more concerned with necessity than they are with describing the nature of elements within the domain of social interaction. Thus to a rules theorist the focus is on how particular meanings can be expressed in particular contexts, not necessarily the meaning or content itself. Thus, the primary concern of the rules theorist is on the cognitive processes necessary to translate particular meanings into representative contents. This focus is partially a result of the heavily rational nature of this approach; which appears to require conscious choices and decision making procedures that lie at the cognitive level. As a result this approach is most useful in specifying the relationships between elements, particularly at the manifest and mediating levels, and how these elements are translated between these levels.

While the rules approach may be very useful for determining necessity between the manifest and mediating level, it is doubtful that it can be applied to the more instinctual, determinative relationships between the underlying and the mediating levels.

The primary focus on the rules approach then has been on the more manifest levels of social interaction.[64] Cushman and Whiting assert that there are two basic types of rules: content and procedural.[65] This follows rather closely the distinction between substance and form of expression, and it is rather typical of most applications of rules.[66] Content in most rules

approaches would appear to include both content and interpretation as explicated here; procedural rules primarily relate to transference. Very seldom, except in their operationalizations, will rules researchers even mention the underlying elements, especially emotions.[67] This leads to two interesting questions: (one) what motive would interactants have to change rules once they are agreed upon and (two) why would interactants seek to develop rules in the first instance, since they necessarily constrain interactions? Answers to these questions can only be made by appealing to the underlying elements.

Rules, as with the other approaches, also fail to comprehend the different causal lags inherent in the phenomenon of social interaction and the overall direction of causality from the underlying to the more surface levels. While they do recognize the flow of events from deeper to more surface levels,[68] they also see a reciprocal causality flowing in the opposite direction that is of the same order. It is difficult to understand the necessity for the formation of rules, if the rules are constantly subject to change at deeper levels; especially when Bateson assumes that the fundamental reason for communication is the creation of predictable patterns.[69]

Sequences

The current emphasis on sequences in social interaction research is partially derivitive from both relational communication and rules approaches.[70] However, sequences have also been used to examine elements of social interaction not traditionally included in these approaches.[71] Since some researchers identify sequences as an element of social interaction[72] or at least its fundamental unit[73]

even if this approach is intimately related to rules approaches and relational communication it will be discussed separately in this section.

Sequential approaches grow out of the assumption that ". . . social behavior should be studied as a process in which the appropriate unit consists of two or more contiguous acts and in which there is some kind of rule-bound regularity in the action-reaction sequences."[74] They are primarily concerned with the probability of one act following another either in a rules perspective, or in terms of probabilities associated with Markov processes. In practice the domain of sequential approaches has primarily been focused on the content or transference elements at the manifest level. Thus sequential approaches primarily focus on message to message sequences of content or on such transference phenomenon as talk-silence sequences.[75] Thus the overwhelming focus of most sequence research has been on a limited range of one of the manifest elements.

One reason for this, of course, is that the very nature of sequences, that of contiguous acts, cannot be adequately translated into the deeper phenomenal levels of group interaction, or for that matter be extended to the study of mutually occurring elements. Even the most ardent advocates of sequences recognize that social interaction is a phenomenon that occurs at many different levels simultaneously.[76] But the sequence approach demands that one and only one act be defined as being present at any particular time; thus, simultaneity and generality, in the sense of elements being continually present, create an inherent dilemma for sequence research.

However, as Cappella[77] recognizes, there are a number of elements of the domain of group interaction that will impact on the sequences observed within

one element. In fact, a rather typical finding of this research is that manifest acts seem to follow one upon another with fairly high probability.[78] This is a reflection of the more enduring temporal flows to the underlying level that subsume the acts at a manifest level; thus recurring patterns of acts are merely reflections of the deeper processes of social interaction that operate at a different time frame. The seemingly discontinuous acts at the manifest levels are really a function of the continuous flow of other elements at different time frames. This is the classic example of a spurious relationship, that is, the observed regularities in manifestations revealed in sequences are attributable to third variables within the domain, that the typical sequential analysis fails to specify .

This approach to social interaction implies a constantly building process where one act follows another in a clear progression. But it is obvious that we must look beyond the immediately preceding act to understand the current one. We also know that in our conversations we may refer to acts far in the past (a number of acts ago) or far in the future (in terms of future reactions).[79] Manifest acts are not what social interaction builds upon, but rather the deeper levels of social interaction, which operate at temporally more enduring time frames and which are necessary to explain temporally non-continguous, but related, acts at the fleeting surface level.

Focusing on sequences implies a level of rationality and an essentially mechanistic conception of interaction. It cannot explain why interactants engage in interaction in the first place, or why it continues; only an appeal to the underlying elements can do this. Certainly we don't continue interactions because of our warm regard for the patterns of message sequences or talk-silence patterns emitted by other interactants. In fact the manifest

elements merely reflect the observable indicants of the underlying elements of interaction that constitute the raison d'etre for interaction. As Pearce and Conklin have noted. the study of speech acts in message to message sequences removes them from the larger units of interaction which serve to contextualize them and give them meaning.[80]

In addition to the problem of a limited focus on the domain of social interaction the foregoing also suggest another problem related to necessity. Necessity is conceived in terms of the probabilities of one act following another. While this may describe regularities, it doesn't explain them. Sequences must look beyond the probabilities, which merely state the extent of regularity, for explanations. These explanations conventionally are related to either rules approaches[81] or relational communication.[82] This points to a deeper problem with sequence approaches; they are merely analytical/descriptive tools without an inherent conceptual framework.[83] To explain the phenomenon they analyze, they must appeal to conceptualizations that transcend sequences, since they have no inherent explanatory power, beyond the very limited one of transition probabilities.

In sum, while sequential approaches are certainly the most sophisticated methodologically and are typically pursued with the greatest rigor, by failing to account for the deeper elements of social interaction they have limited their significance, and by failing to discern the differential temporal rates of flow they have erroneously placed an emphasis on a fleeting phenomenon, when, in actuality, ongoing interactions at their most fundamental levels are remarkably stable and enduring. In essence, sequential approaches are equivalent to studying the ocean by noting the patterns of waves as they strike

a barren beach. The waves are the end result of a number of contextual and deeper seated processes, but sequences do not directly reveal their nature, just their end results.

Concluding remarks

The middle range approaches reviewed in this section all examine a limited range of the domain and of interrelationships within that domain. The relational approach concentrates primarily on three elements: content, interpretation, and relationships, in the limited context of the control dimension of interaction. It fails to specify necessity, except in the narrow sense of association.

The rules approach is primarily concerned with establishing necessity between the mediating and manifest elements, but it fails to consider selection and emotions and, in most instances, relationships. The sequence approach is primarily concerned with describing the manifest elements and it must appeal for establishing necessity to other approaches to social interaction.

In general, in different ways all of these approaches are primarily concerned with the most observable and manifest elements of the phenomenon of group interaction; this is partially attributable to their common foundation in the Palo Alto Group:

> Bateson assumes, rather, that the unconscious is continually manifested in the exchange of messages, and one need go no further than behavioral data to comprehend the necessary dimensions of interaction.
>
> The pragmatic consequence of this position is that the therapeutic model of the Palo Alto Group focuses upon what is currently observable in an interactional system instead of _why_ it is happening or _how_ it got to be that way.[84]

But if social interaction research is ever going to explain the phenomenon, it must confront these questions of why and how that can only be answered by understanding the temporal and logical nature of the underlying elements.

It is the contention of this perspective that these current approaches to social interaction are limited because of their focus. By failing to simultaneously examine the entire domain of group interaction they necessarily offer incomplete views of the phenomenon; views that are further hampered by an incomplete understanding of the logical and temporal nature of the phenomenon that govern interrelationships and thus necessity.[85] Even more troubling for the eventual growth of the field of social interaction research is the lack of comparability of these approaches as currently conceived, since each is approaching the phenomenon from differing directions in terms of the range of the domain examined and the specification of the nature of interrelationships.[86]

It is understandable that researchers may wish to focus on specific aspects of social interaction, but when they do this it is essential that they have some understanding of where these more limited approaches stand in relationship to more encompassing perspectives. If there is an awareness of the other elements of the domain, and their potential impacts, then research can be designed to account for the impacts of variables that may act as limiting conditions for more narrow inquiries.[87] If this step isn't taken, then any results may be confounded due to a lack of systematic attempts to account for third variables. More importantly, by understanding the entirety of the phenomenon individual research studies can more clearly contribute to a steady evolutionary growth of the field, since any gaps in research inquiry will be detectable, and the significance of any particular study for understanding the whole will be understood.

CONCLUSION

In sum, this essay has focused on the stability of forces operative in an ongoing interaction. It has argued that isolating the elemental structure characteristic of social interaction across a wide array of situations is more heuristically useful than attempting the fruitless task of exhaustively describing social interaction in one or more specific situations. The result has been a perspective of social interaction which specified key limiting conditions, detailed the crucial elements of the domain, and developed a conceptual framework for specifying interrelationships between elements of the domain. Thus this approach moves from mere description of social interaction to laying the groundwork for explanation of the phenomenon.

Remarkably, few attempts at developing such an encompassing perspective have been articulated to date, although the field has recently seen attempts to develop middle range approaches that move beyond mere descriptions. However, these middle range approaches suffer from the lack of a grand theory which can serve to guide their development and isolate crucial areas of inquiry. While the perspective developed here may not be the final answer to developing a complete conceptual perspective of social interaction it is at least suggestive of the direction conceptual work in the field should be heading, since without an organizing paradigm, social interaction research will continue to be a field characterized by much activity, but also by a very halting and erratic development of conceptual understandings of the phenomenon which should be its focus of inquiry.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Walter H. Crockett and Paul Friedman, "Theoretical Explorations of the Processes of Initial Interactions," Western Journal of Speech Communication, 44 (1980), 86-92.

[2]Robert D. McPhee, "A Model of Social Network Development in Organizations," paper, Academy of Management, Atlanta, Georgia, 1979, p. 4.

[3]Jesse G. Delia, "Some Tentative Thoughts Concerning the Study of Interpersonal Relationships and Their Development," Western Journal of Speech Communication, 44 (1980), 97-103.

[4]Gregory Bateson, Steps to an Ecology of Mind (New York: Ballantine, 1972), pp. 131-132.

[5]B. Aubrey Fisher and Leonard C. Hawes, "An Interact System Model: Generating a Grounded Theory of Small Groups," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 57 (1971), 444-453; William T. Rogers and Stanley E. Jones, "Effects of Dominance Tendancies on Floor Holding and Interruption Behavior in Dyadic Interaction," Human Communication Research, 1 (1975), 113-122.

[6]Robert Dubin, Theory Building (New York: Free Press, 1969).

[7]Fisher and Hawes, p. 446.

[8]Susan Ervin-Tripp, "An Analysis of the Interaction of Language, Topic, and Listener," American Anthropologist, 66 (1964), 86-102; William H. Ittelson, Leanne G. Rivlin, and Harold M. Proshansky, "The Use of Behaviorial Maps in Environmental Psychology," in Environmental Psychology: Man and His Physical

Setting, ed. H. M. Proshansky, W. H. Ittelson, and L. G. Rivlin (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1970), p. 658-668; Matthew Speier, How to Observe Face-to-Face Communication: A Sociological Introduction (Pacific Palisades, Ca.: Goodyear Publishing, 1973), p. 37; Thomas W. Malone, "System Simulation: Computer Simulation of Two-Person Interactions," Behaviorial Science, 20 (1975), 260-267.

[9]Weldon Kees and Jurgeen Ruesch, "Function and Meaning in the Physical Environment," in Proshansky, Ittelson, and Rivlin, ed., p. 24.

[10]Richard Hackman and Charles G. Morris, "Group Tasks, Group Interaction Process, and Proposed Integration," in Advances in Experimental Social Psychology, VIII, ed. L. Berkowitz (New York: Academic Press, 1975), pp. 45-99; Ittelson, Rivlin, and Proshansky, p. 659; Malone, p. 261; Speier, p. 45.

[11]Hackman and Morris, p. 50; Henry L. Lennard and Arnold Bernstein, Patterns of Human Interaction (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1969), pp. 8-25, Speier, p. 45.

[12]This view runs counter to other approaches to social interaction; for example see: Dennis S. Gouran, "Group Communication: Perspectives and Priorities for Future Research," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 59 (1973), 22-29. While Gouran argues strongly that the study of group communication will best advance by a focus on an inductive approach to the specific context of group decision making, even he recognizes "researchers will ultimately be forced to examine a broad spectrum of behavior in a variety of contexts to understand fully the enterprise in question" (p. 23).

[13]It is necessary to attempt this sort of deductive, more abstract approach since in spite of over thirty years of research devoted to the development of categories of social interaction: no clear, complete, and exhaustive schema has been developed to describe social interaction in a wide array of situations and there have been remarkably few attempts to specify, yet alone explain, interrelationships among elements.

[14]Donald G. Ellis, "Issues in Analyzing Sequential Interaction Data: A Plea for Rigor in Matters of Observation," paper, Speech Communication Association, Washington, D.C., 1977, p. 8.

[15]Georg Simmel, "The Persistance of Social Groups," American Journal of Sociology, 3 (1898), 829-836, p. 829.

[16]Social interaction is used here as a generic term that incorporates communication and other processes associated with human interrelationships. These scholars had many diverse purposes, their very diversity is useful for the development of this perspective since only by examining divergent perspectives can we generate more systematic statements concerning the totality of interaction. Lennard and Bernstein, p. 43.

[17]Michael Argyle, Social Interaction (New York: Aldine-Atherton, 1969), p. 200; Kresten Bjerg, "Interplay Analysis: A Preliminary Report on an Approach to the Problems of Interpersonal Understanding," Acta Psychologica, 28 (1968), 201-245; A. Paul Hare, "The Dimensions of Social Interaction," Behaviorial Science, 5 (1960), 211-215; Leonard C. Hawes, "Elements of a Model for Communication Processes," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 59 (1973), 11-21;

Jeanne Watson, "Formal Analysis of Sociable Interaction," Sociometry, 21 (1958), 269-280; Paul Watzlawick, Janet H. Beavin and Don D. Jackson, Pragmatics of Human Communication (New York: Norton, 1967), p. 54.

[18]Muzafer Sherif and Carolyn W. Sherif, Reference Groups: Exploration into Conformity and Deviation of Adolescents (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1964), p. 90.

[19]W. Barnett Pearce and Forrest Conklin, "A Model of Hierarchichal Meanings in Coherent Conversation and a Study of 'Indirect' Responses," Communication Monographs, 46 (1979), 75-87.

[20]For example, analysis of psychotherapy, Frank Auld, Jr., and Alice M. White, "Sequential Dependencies in Psychotherapy," Journal of Abnormal Social Psychology, 58 (1959), 100-104; or group problem solving, Dennis S. Gouran and John E. Baird, Jr., "An Analysis of Distributional and Sequential Structure in Problem Solving and Informal Group Discussion," Speech Monographs, 39 (1972), 16-22.

[21]Edmund J. Amidon and Elizabeth Hunter, Improving Teaching: The Analysis of Classroom Verbal Interaction (New York: Aldine-Atherton, 1969), p. 211; Robert F. Bales, Interaction Process Analysis (Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley, 1950), p. 9; Edgar F. Borgatta, "The Analysis of Patterns of Social Interaction," Social Forces, 44 (1965), 27-34; Laynor P. Carter, William Haythorn, Beatrice Metrowitz, and John Lanzetta," A Note on a New Technique of Interaction Recording," Journal of Abnormal Social Psychology, 46 (1951), 258-260; Laura Crowell and Thomas M. Scheidel, "Categories for Analysis of Idea Development in

Discussion Groups," The Journal of Social Psychology, 54 (1961), 155-168; Ned A. Flanders, "Interaction Models of Critical Teaching Behaviors," in Interaction Analysis: Theory Research and Application, eds. Edmund J. Amidon and J. B. Hough, (Reading: Mass: Addison-Wesley, 1967), pp. 360-374; Hare, pp. 211-212; W. W. Lewis, John M. Newell, and John Withall, "An Analysis of Classroom Patterns of Communication," Psychological Reports, 9 (1961), 211-219; Richard Longabaugh, "The Structure of Interpersonal Behavior," Sociometry, 29 (1966), 441-460; Michael T. McGuire and Stephan Lorch, "Natural Language Conversation Modes," Journal of Nervous and Mental Disorders, 146 (1968), 221-224; Thomas M. Scheidel and Laura Crowell, "Feedback in Small Group Communication," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 52 (1966), 273-278; William U. Snyder, "An Investigation of the Nature of Non-Directive Psychotherapy," Journal of General Psychology, 33 (1945), 193-223; Bernard Steinzor, "The Development and Evaluation of a Measure of Social Interaction: Part 1, the Development and Evaluation of Reliability," Human Relations, 2 (1949), 103-121; Hans H. Strupp, Psychotherapists in Action (New York: Grune & Stratton, 1960), p. 250; Walter Weintraub and H. Aronson, "The Application of Verbal Behavior Analysis to the Study of Psychological Defense Mechanisms: Methodology and Preliminary Report," Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease, 134 (1962), 169-181.

[22]Bales, p. 82; Hare, p. 211-212.

[23]Curiously, emotions have been infrequently examined in most recent studies of communication even though they have been considered to be a crucial element of the conceptual domain of interpersonal communication, Arthur P. Bochner, Edmund P. Kaminski, and Mary Anne Fitzpatrick, "The Conceptual Domain of Interpersonal Communication Behavior: A Factor Analytic Study," Human Communication Research, 3 (1977), 291-302.

[24]Argyle, p. 202; Auld and White, p. 101; Bales, p. 9; Bjerg, p. 221; Borgatta, p. 28; Carter, Haythorn, Meirowitz, and Lanzetta, p. 259; Flanders, p. 367; Hare, p. 212; Lewis, Newell, and Withall, p. 214; Longabaugh, p. 446; Jurgen Ruesch and A. Rodney Prestwood, "Interaction Processes and Personal Codification," Journal of Personality, 18 (1949), 391-430; Snyder, p. 199; F. Kraüpl Taylor, "The Three-Dimensional Basis of Emotional Interactions in Small Groups," Human Relations, 7 (1954), 441-471; Weintraub and Aronson, p. 176.

[25]Amidon and Hunter, p. 211; Argyle, p. 201; Bjerg, p. 212-213; Robert N. Bostrom, "Patterns of Communicative Interaction in Small Groups," Speech Monographs, 37 (1970), 257-263; Hare, p. 211; Joseph Jaffe and Stanley Feldstein, Rythyms of Dialogue (New York: Academic Press, 1970), pp. 9-12; Lewis, Newell, and Withall, p. 214; Elliot McGinnies and Irwin Altmann, "Discussion as a Function of Attitudes and Content of a Persuasive Communication," Journal of Applied Psychology, 43 (1959), 53-59; Benjamin Pope and Aron W. Siegman, "Relationship and Verbal Behavior in the Initial Interview," in Studies in Dyadic Communication, ed. Aron W. Siegman and Benjamin Pope, (New York: Pergamon Press, 1972), pp. 69-89; Ruesch and Prestwood, p. 394; Speier, pp. 72-82; Steinzor, pp. 108-109; Watson, 271-272; Weintraub and Aronson, pp. 174-175.

[26]Argyle, p. 202.

[27]Bostrom, pp. 260-261.

[28]Lewis, Newall, & Withall, p. 213.

[29]Erving Goffman, "Alienation from Interaction," Human Relations, 10 (1957), 47-60.

[30]Argyle, p. 200-201; Bjerg, p. 219; Carter, Haythorn, Meirowitz, and Lanzetta, p. 259; Hare, pp. 211-212; Hawes, pp. 17-18; Pope and Siegman, pp. 69-74; Ruesch and Prestwood, p. 405; Speier, p. 37-40; Watzlawick, Beavin, and Jackson, p. 54.

[31]See Donald P. Cushman and W. Barnett Pearce, "Generality and Necessity in Three Types of Human Communication Theory: Special Attention to Rules Theory," in Communication Yearbook 1, ed. Brent D. Ruben (New Brunswick: N.J.: Transaction Books, 1977), pp. 173-182.

[32]Dubin, p. 141.

[33]Dean E. Hewes, "The Sequential Analysis of Social Interaction," The Quarterly Journal of Speech, 65 (1979), 56-73.

[34]Bjerg, p. 238; Hawes, p. 14. Another way of expressing this is to describe social interaction as 'thick' or a phenomenon that occurs at many different levels; see Theodore M. Mills, "Changing Paradigms for Studying Human Groups," Applied Behaviorial Science, 15 (1979), 407-421.

[35]B. Aubrey Fisher and Wayne A. Beach, "Content and Relationship Dimensions of Communicative Behavior: An Exploratory Study," Western Journal of Speech Communication, 43 (1979), 201-221; B. Aubrey Fisher, "Content and Relationship Dimensions of Communication in Decision Making Groups," Communication Quarterly, 27 (1979), 3-11.

[36]Georg Simmel, "The Number of Members as Determining the Sociological Form of the Group," American Journal of Sociology, 8 (1902), 1-46.

[37]Hare, pp. 211-212.

[38]Joseph N. Cappella, "Talk-Silence Sequences in Informal Conversations: I," Human Communication Research, 6 (1979), 3-17; Donald Cushman and Gordon C. Whiting," An Approach to Communication Theory: Towards Consensus on Rules," Journal of Communication, 22 (1972), 217-238; Richard V. Farace, Peter R. Monge, and Hamish M. Russell, Communicating and Organizing (Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley, 1977), pp. 134-135; Malcolm R. Parks, "Toward an Axiomatic Theory of Relational Communication," paper, International Communication Association, Chicago, Ill., 1975, p. 3; Malcolm R. Parks, "Relational Communication: Theory and Research," Human Communication Research, 3 (1977), 372-381.

[39]Wilder, p. 174.

[40]The manner in which these elements were delineated follows well accepted procedures for classifying concepts. For example, see John C. McKinney, "Constructive Typology: Structure and Function," in An Introduction to Social Research ed. J. T. Doby (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1967), pp. 230-243.

[41]Pearce and Conklin, pp. 79-81.

[42]Ittelson, Rivlin, and Proshanshy, p. 127.

[43]Pearce and Conklin, p. 81, also note the underlying role of relationships, what they define to be archtypes, or the "basic patterns of interpersonal relationships which are articulated as episodic structure,"; Wilder, p. 177.

[44]Cappella, p. 5-8.

[45]Bochner, Kaminski, and Fitzpatrick, p. 300; this is also attributable to an over emphasis on the rational and cognitive elements of social interaction; see Steven W. Duck, "Persoral Relationships Research in the 1980s: Toward an Understanding of Complex Human Sociality," Western Journal of Speech Communication,

44 (1980), 114-119. Reviews of the literature related to human interaction have consistently identified affection, or emotions, as a coequal dimension with control, or relationships, with both being cited as the fundamental elements of social interaction: see for example Robert C. Carson, Interaction Concepts of Personality (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1970); pp. 98-103; Brian L. Hawkins, "A Quasi-Experimental Study of 'Interpersonal Communication Climate' in Superior Subordinate Relationships," paper, Speech Communication Association, 1974.

[46]Robert W. Norton and Loyd S. Pettegrew, "Attentiveness as a Style of Communication; A Structural Analysis," Communication Monographs, 46 (1979), 13-26.

[47]Robert Freed Bales, Personality and Interpersonal Behavior (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), p. 92.

[48]Hare, p. 212.

[49]Parks, "Toward an Axiomatic Theory of Relational Communication," p. 3.

[50]Robert G. Barker, The Stream of Behavior: Explorations of its Structure and Content (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1963); Pearce and Conklin, p. 76.

[51]Pearce and Conklin, p. 77-78.

[52]D. P. Cushman and W. Barnett Pearce, "Generality and Necessity in Three Types of Human Communication Theory - Special Attention to Rules Theory," in Communication Yearbook I ed. B. D. Ruben, (New Brunswick, N. J.: Transaction Books, 1977), pp. 173-182.

[53]For a more detailed description of the model and associated empirical tests see: [redacted] "Preliminary Examination of Four Substantive Models of Social Interaction in Three Situations," paper, Speech Communication Association, San Antonio, Texas, 1979; [redacted] "A Model of Social Interaction: Further Tests in Radio and Television Situations," paper, International Communication Association, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1981.

[54]A. Berkley Driessel, "Communication Theory and Research Strategy: A Meta-Theoretical Analysis," Journal of Communication, 17 (1967), 92-107; Robert K. Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure (New York: The Free Press, 1968).

[55]Wilder, p. 171.

[56]Frank E. Millar, L. Edna Rogers-Millar, and John A. Courtright, "Relational Control and Dyadic Understanding: An Exploratory Predictive Regression Model," in Communication Yearbook 3 ed. D. Nimmo (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1979), pp. 213-224, p. 213.

[57]Parks, "Toward an Axiomatic Theory of Relational Communication," p. 1.

[58]See Parks, "Relational Communication: Theory and Research," p. 379, for example.

[59]Parks, "Toward an Axiomatic Theory of Relational Communication," p. 3.

[60]Millar, Rogers-Millar, and Courtright, p. 214-215.

[61]Wilder, p. 177.

[62]Cushman and Whiting, p. 217.

[63]Stuart J. Sigman, "On Communication Rules from a Social Perspective," Human Communication Research, 7 (1980), 37-51.

[64]Although Pearce and Conklin, p. 81, are extending this approach to deeper phenomenal levels.

[65]Cushman and Whiting, p. 217.

[66]See Farace, Monge and Russell, pp. 134-138.

[67]In operationalizing their study of hierarchical meanings Pearce and Conklin, p. 83, instructed their subjects to consider response styles in terms of stipulated (or limiting) conditions that included assumption of certain relationships and, more interestingly, descriptors of emotions.

[68]Pearce and Conklin, p. 81.

[69]Bateson, pp. 131-132.

[70]Wilder, p. 182.

[71]Cappella, p. 3.

[72]Argyle, p. 202.

[73]Fisher and Hawes, p. 448; Hawes, p. 13.

[74]Ernest L. Stech, "Sequential Structure in Human Social Communication," Human Communication Research, 1 (1975), 168-179, p. 169.

[75]This focus is partially a result of methodological necessity since: measuring interpretations, for example, creates very difficult coding problems and focusing on more than one element at a time vastly complicates the Markov modeling

process; Hewes, pp. 61. In addition, violating assumptions of mutual exclusivity leads to 'less rigorous' coding procedures: Donald G. Ellis, "Issues in Analyzing Sequential Interaction Data: A Plea for Rigor in Matters of Observation," paper, Speech Communication Association, Washington, D.C., 1977, p. 8.

[76]Hawes, p. 18.

[77]Cappella, p. 5-8.

[78]Stech, p. 173.

[79]David K. Berlo, "Communication as a Process: Review and Commentary," in Communication Yearbook 1 ed. B. D. Ruben, (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1977), pp. 11-27.

[80]Pearce and Conklin, p. 78.

[81]Wilder, p. 182.

[82]Donald G. Ellis, "Relational Control in Two Group Systems," Communication Monographs, 46 (1979), 153-166.

[83]See Dean E. Hewes, Sally Planalp, and Michael Streibel, "Methods for the Analysis of Mutual Influence in Small Group Decision Making," paper, Central States Speech Association, Chicago, Ill. 1980.

[84]Wilder, p. 172.

[85]If all relevant variables are not included in a perspective of social interaction, then the relationships between elements that are included are necessarily distorted. This leads to serious problems in interpretations of any tests of

of models, since there is always a distinct possibility of specification error or spurious relationships between elements as a result of the failure to include crucial third variables.

[86]Dubin, p. 137.

[87]Cappella, p. 5-8, specifies four factors, which are somewhat related to the elements of the domain identified here, that may modify observed consistencies in talk-silence patterns. These four factors are cognitive, affective-intrapersonal, affective-interpersonal, and partner.

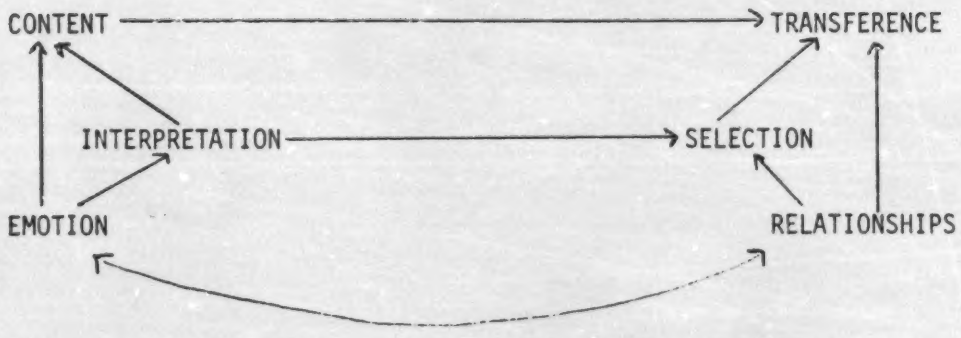
FIGURE 1

CLASSIFICATION OF THE ELEMENTS CONTAINED WITHIN THE DOMAIN OF SOCIAL INTERACTION

	METAFUNCTIONAL DIMENSIONS	
	SUBSTANCE	FORM
PHENOMENAL LEVEL		
SURFACE	CONTENT	TRANSFERENCE
MEDIATING	INTERPRETATION	SELECTION
UNDERLYING	EMOTION	RELATIONSHIP

FIGURE 2

A MODEL OF SOCIAL INTERACTION



APPENDIX A

INCLUSION OF ELEMENTS WITHIN DOMAIN IN PREVIOUS DESCRIPTIONS OF SOCIAL INTERACTION

DESCRIPTION	CONTENT	INTERPRETATION	EMOTION	TRANSFERENCE	SELECTION	RELATIONSHIPS
Amidon and Hunter (1966)		X		X		
Argyle (1969)	X		X	X	X	X
Auld and White (1959)		X	X			
Bales (1950)		X	X			
Bjerg (1968)	X		X	X		X
Borgatta (1965)		X	X			
Bostrom (1970)				X	X	
Carter et al. (1951)		X	X			X
Crowell and Schiedell (1961)		X				
Flanders (1967)		X	X			
Goffman (1957)					X	
Gouran and Baird (1962)		X				
Hare (1958)	X	X	X	X		X
Hawes (1973)	X					X
Jaffe and Feldstein (1970)				X		

	CONTENT	INTERPRETATION	EMOTION	TRANSFERENCE	SELECTION	RELATIONSHIPS
Lewis et al. (1961)		X	X	X	X	
Longabaugh (1966)		X	X			
McGinnies and Altman (1959)				X		
McGuire and Lorch (1968)		X				
Pope and Siegman (1972)				X		X
Reusch and Prestwood (1949)			X	X		
Schiedell and Crowell (1966)		X				
Snyder (1945)		X	X			
Speier (1973)				X		X
Steinzor (1949)		X		X		
Strupp (1960)		X				
Taylor (1954)			X			
Watson (1958)	X			X		
Watzlawick et al. (1967)	X					X
Weintraub and Aronson (1962)		X	X	X		